
[Home](#) | [Content Syndication](#) | [Business](#) | [Career](#) | [Workplace](#) | [Networking](#) | [Web Women](#)
[Hispanic Women](#) | [International Women](#) | [Women in Society](#) | [AW Leadership Journal](#) | [Money](#) | [Lifestyle](#)

Advancing Women In Leadership

Highly Successful Women Administrators: The Inside Story of How They Got There *Sandra Lee Gupton & Gloria Appelt Slick*

A Book Review

Kimberly Griffith, Ph. D. & Janice P. Thompson

Griffith & Thompson, Winter, 1998

We are encouraged to acknowledge the fact that gender-related problems will face us as we pursue educational administrative careers. Our family, friends, and professional peers can provide the wisdom and support we need to lead with excellence.

One of the most exciting things about reading this book is its application to our own lives: each administrator's story validates our personal trials and tribulations, hard work, and desire to succeed as women administrators in education. The authors, Dr. Sandra Gupton and Dr. Gloria Slick, have provided an excellent service by presenting the viewpoints, personal stories, lesson frustrations, and accomplishments of successful female educational leaders. Using a strong research base, the authors provide insight into a field which historically is theorized and mandated by the viewpoints of White males.

To our knowledge, no other study of this type has focused upon women in the educational power positions, the top executive administrators in public education: high school principals, assistant superintendents, and superintendents. The authors sagaciously note that women bring with them a way of leading that is different from the traditional, transactional style. The unique, and possibly natural, ability women possess is required by today's administrators of reform. This book provides a glimpse into the hearts and minds of the women behind the text and encourages women administrators by stressing the need today for a gentler, more values-oriented, integrative approach to educational leadership.

Each chapter examines issues that women encounter on their journeys into careers in educational administration in the maintenance of their positions, and in their professional and personal growth. In chapter 1, the authors note that being sensitive to the political arena's perspective of women, as well as

developing political awareness of the system and how it functions, is imperative. Having the proper credentials is only part of the preparation necessary for success in the job, and does not guarantee acquiring or retaining a position. Commonalities shared by female administrators indicate that one must be prepared for challenges above and beyond what might be expected of male counterparts. Another lesson indicated in the chapter is that the journey to the top involves insight into both the personal and transpersonal, as well as psychological and sociological, aspects of our changing cultural milieu.

In chapter 2, women administrators call loudly to other women, encouraging them to plan their careers. Each participant's story resounds with the advice that career mapping is essential. Lack of planning has kept many women from successfully reaching the top. The authors indicate that it is important to have a blueprint for your career and to use strategizing skills from the start. Networking with others and learning from mentors can help seize opportunities to grow and facilitate career advancement.

The third lesson reminds women that perseverance must prevail. Several of the women who provided responses to the authors indicated that they had little encouragement to pursue careers not traditionally occupied by women. Cultural biases also abound, and the data indicates that women in administration encounter numerous gender-related barriers. Other issues of this chapter cluster around family responsibilities and mobility problems which each woman overcame by tapping into the ability to persevere.

In chapter 4, the issues of diligence and professionalism are stressed. Gupton and Slick found that women frequently refer not only to having a strong work ethic, but also to being willing and able to work harder than their male counterparts in administrative positions. Many women administrators feel that they still have to prove their worth in a male-dominated environment. The authors also indicate the need for women to hold fast to both a high priority of professionalism and strength of character. Remembering to laugh, refusing to whine, and keeping a professional, dedicated, positive attitude are essential for women in leadership.

In chapter 5, the results of a November, 1995, USA Weekend reader survey indicate that compassion, tolerance, responsibility, integrity, and perseverance are highly valued by American families today. Interestingly, the authors note that these same values and families today. Interestingly, the authors note that these same values form the core characteristics of women leaders who tell their stories in the book. The importance of believing in oneself, adhering to one's values and maintaining personal integrity despite political pressure is addressed. Most of the women administrators surveyed acknowledged that they make decisions in the best interests of the students.

In chapter 6, women are encouraged to network and support each other. We are encouraged to acknowledge the fact that gender-related problems will face us as we pursue educational administrative careers. Our family, friends, and professional peers can provide the wisdom and support we need to lead with excellence. Political savvy and skill are also recognized as essential elements for success as leaders in education.

The seventh lesson concerns the importance of both finding and being a mentor. Specific mentoring strategies are outlined in order to improve communication and to share the power of information. Lifelong learning, risk-taking, envisioning, establishing priorities, and reflecting are suggested to establish us as credible leaders.

The final lesson is to lead by example. One woman administrator said that the ability to facilitate meetings, to resolve conflicts, to problem solve with diverse groups, and to listen well have changed the status of women in education. Women possess the attributes of creativity, flexibility, and orientation toward people rather than things.

This book is an important educational tool for any woman who is considering, pursuing or currently working in an administrative role, and it greatly enhance the contents of educational administration courses. A very valuable resource, one should read it early in a career. (It would have significantly influenced our career plans.) The advice of others in this study has provided insights into career planning, strategies for reaching goals, identification of the political arena in an educational environment, and the means for establishing a network base for managing the frustrations and obstacles which can occur in a woman's administrative pursuits. After reading Gupton and Slick's "pearls of wisdom", women will know that they can **GO FOR IT!**

Kimberly Griffith is Assistant Professor for the Department of Professional Pedagogy at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. E-mail: griffithkg@hal.Lamar.edu

Janice Thompson is Field Experiences Supervisor and former Acting Assistant Director for Field Experiences at University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. E-mail: Janice.Thompson@USM.edu

[AWL Journal Home Page](#)

[AWL Journal Volume 1, Number 2, Winter 1998](#)

[Subscribe to AdvancingWomen Network - A free Ezine from AdvancingWomen.com](#)

Copyright Advancing Women in Leadership holds the copyright to each article; however, any article may be reproduced without permission, for educational purposes only, provided that the full and accurate bibliographic citation and the following credit line is cited: Copyright (year) by the Advancing Women in Leadership, Advancing Women Website, www.advancingwomen.com; reproduced with permission from the publisher. Any article cited as a reference in any other form should also report the same such citation, following APA or other style manual guidelines for citing electronic publications.

[AW Home](#) | [Workplace](#) | [Biz Tools](#) | [Career Center](#) | [Business Center](#) | [Money](#) | [Networking Lifestyle](#) | [Web Women](#) | [Educators](#) | [Leadership Journal](#) | [Hispanic Women](#) | [International Women News](#) | [Chat](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Search](#) | [Guestbook](#) | [Awards](#) | [Support AW](#) | [College Investment Bookstore](#) | [Investment Newstand](#) | [Market Mavens](#)

[About Us](#) | [Content Syndication](#) | [Advertising Info](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Site Map](#)

AdvancingWomen Web site Copyright © Advancing Women (TM), 1996 - 2000
For questions or comment regarding content, please contact publisher@advancingwomen.com.
For technical questions or comment regarding this site, please contact webmaster@advancingwomen.com.
Duplication without express written consent is prohibited